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Externalism and Privileged Access are Inconsistent

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In my paper “Anti-Individualism and Privileged Access” (1991a), I argued that an externalist, or anti-individualist, view about cognitive properties is inconsistent with the traditional Cartesian view that we all have a privileged non-empirical way of knowing about our own thoughts and other cognitive acts and states. In this paper, I want to clarify both my argument and the specific principles of privileged access and externalism to which the argument does and does not apply. I also want to discuss the main response that has been made to my argument, and defend my view of what the correct response should be.

1. The Reductio Argument for Incompatibilism

The externalist principle about cognitive properties which I argued is inconsistent with privileged access can be stated as follows:

***Semantic Externalism* (SE)**

Many *de dicto*-structured predicates of the form ‘is thinking that p’ express properties that are wide, in the sense that possession of such a property by an agent *logically implies* the existence of contingent objects or substances of a certain sort that are external to the agent.¹

Here, I mean ‘logically implies’ in a broad sense that includes what I have elsewhere called ‘conceptual implication’. (See McKinsey 1991a, p. 14 and 1991b, p. 152.) For simplicity, I have stated SE by use of one specific form of cognitive predicate ‘is

thinking that p', but defenders of SE would endorse a similar principle for all other cognitive predicates of the form 'Cs that p', where C is any cognitive operator.

The traditional Cartesian principle of privileged access which I argued is inconsistent with SE is a principle to the effect that we have privileged access, not just to our thoughts, but to our thoughts as having certain *contents*:

Privileged Access to Content (PAC)

It is necessarily true that if a person x is thinking that p, then x can in principle come to know a priori that he himself, or she herself, is thinking that p.²

Here, by 'a priori' knowledge I mean knowledge that is obtained "just by thinking", and not on the basis of empirical investigation or perceptual observation. Thus under a priori knowledge I include knowledge that is obtained from introspection of one's own cognitive and sensory states, acts, and experiences, as well as knowledge of the truths of logic and mathematics that is obtained by pure reason.³ Again, as with SE, I have stated PAC for the special case of occurrent thought, but defenders of PAC might also wish to endorse similar principles for other cognitive states and acts such as belief, intention, and desire.

My argument that PAC and SE are inconsistent was a simple *reductio ad absurdum*. As an instance of the form 'is thinking that p', I chose a predicate that contains a natural kind term like 'water', since such predicates are generally assumed to express wide psychological properties. So suppose that a given person, Oscar say, is thinking that water is wet. Then it follows by PAC that

- (1) Oscar can know a priori that he's thinking that water is wet.

And given that the predicate ‘is thinking that water is wet’ expresses a logically wide psychological property, it is also true that

(2) The proposition that Oscar is thinking that water is wet logically implies E, where E is some “external” proposition that asserts or logically implies the existence of contingent objects or substances of a certain sort that are external to Oscar. Depending on the form of externalism in question, E might for instance be the proposition that water exists, or the proposition that Oscar has experienced samples of water, or the proposition that members of Oscar’s linguistic community have experienced samples of water,

But whatever external proposition we take E to be, the conjunction of (1) and (2) is clearly absurd. For if Oscar can know a priori that he’s thinking that water is wet, and the proposition that he’s thinking that water is wet logically implies E, then Oscar could correctly deduce E from something he knows a priori, and so Oscar could also know E itself a priori. But this consequence is absurd. For E is an external proposition such as the proposition that water exists, a proposition that asserts or logically implies the existence of contingent external things, and so Oscar could not possibly know E a priori. Thus if the property of thinking that water is wet is logically wide, then contrary to PAC, no one could know a priori that he or she is thinking that water is wet. Of course the same reductio can be given for any logically wide property expressed by a predicate of the form ‘is thinking that p’, and so in general SE is inconsistent with PAC.

It is worth noting that the reductio just given assumes only one premise. This premise is a principle to the effect that the capacity for a priori knowledge is closed under logical implication:

Closure of Apriority under Logical Implication (CA)

Necessarily, for any person x and any propositions P and Q , if x can know a priori that P , and P logically implies Q , then x can know a priori that Q .

Given CA alone, the absurd conclusion that Oscar can know E a priori follows from the conjunction of (1) and (2).⁴

2. The Proper Response to the Reductio

Of course, the first response to a correct reductio (whose only premise is a necessary truth) should be to note that the assumptions reduced to absurdity, being inconsistent, cannot all be true. In the present case, this means that at least one, perhaps both, of SE and PAC must be false, and so the question arises as to which of these principles is false, and as to whether one or both of the principles can be plausibly revised so as to achieve a consistent view.

Oddly enough, however, no one who has responded critically to my argument has discussed these additional questions that the argument raises.⁵ Instead, the main response has been that of *evading* the argument by insisting that semantic externalism regarding cognitive properties should not be understood, as it is understood in SE, in terms of logical implication. Rather, this response goes, semantic externalism should be understood in terms of some weaker dependency relation such as *metaphysical* entailment, or even *counterfactual* implication.⁶

I am myself partly responsible for turning the discussion in this direction, since in the paper (1991a) where I first gave the reductio I was also concerned to counter Burge's (1988) attempt to defend the consistency of anti-individualism and privileged access. Burge endorsed a form of anti-individualism or externalism on which a person's

possession of cognitive properties such as those expressed by predicates of the form ‘is thinking that p’ may “necessarily depend on” or “presuppose” the bearing of relations by the person to things in the person’s physical or social environment. (See Burge 1988, pp. 650, 653, 654.) Burge never tells us what sort of necessary dependency relation he has in mind, nor what the term ‘presuppose’ is supposed to mean in this context. However, Burge does clearly insist that one can directly and nonempirically know one’s own mental states without being able to know a priori the facts about the external world on which those states “depend” (Burge 1988, p. 651). So I suggested on Burge’s behalf that he might be tacitly endorsing a form of externalism that is based on the relation of metaphysical dependency, rather than logical implication (McKinsey 1991a, pp. 12-13). We might call this view

Metaphysical Semantic Externalism (MSE)

Many *de dicto*-structured predicates of the form ‘is thinking that p’ express properties that are wide, in the sense that possession of such a property by an agent *metaphysically entails* the existence of contingent objects or substances of a certain sort that are external to the agent.⁷

Unlike SE, MSE is clearly consistent with unrestricted privileged access in the form of PAC (as I pointed out in the original paper 1991a, p. 13). This is because, as Kripke (1972) showed, there are some metaphysical dependencies that can only be known a posteriori and that cannot form the basis of a priori knowledge. In short, in contrast to logical implication, the capacity for a priori knowledge is obviously *not* closed under metaphysical entailment. However, as I argued in the original paper, MSE is a trivial, uninteresting form of semantic externalism. For given certain commonly

accepted materialist assumptions, it turns out that probably *every* psychological property is “wide” in the metaphysical sense invoked by MSE. (For details, see McKinsey 1991a, 1994b, 2002a.)

I will return to more detailed discussion of “metaphysical” forms of externalism below. Right now, I want to evaluate the move to MSE simply as a response to my *reductio*. Those who make this move seem to be primarily motivated by the desire to avoid inconsistency with privileged access in the form of PAC. These philosophers thus want to hold on to PAC while (tacitly) giving up the strong form of externalism SE, replacing SE by the weaker principle MSE. But this way of responding to my *reductio* is precisely the *opposite* of the correct response. For there is strong, well known semantic evidence which shows that SE is in fact *true* and hence that PAC is *false*. So we should hold on to SE and replace PAC with a weaker, restricted principle that is consistent with SE.

3. Why Semantic Externalism (SE) is True

Defenders of externalism like Burge (1988), Brueckner (1992), McLaughlin and Tye (1998), and others who advocate the metaphysical evasion are committed to the conjunction of MSE and PAC. But as these metaphysical externalists all seem to concede, my *reductio* argument shows that SE is incompatible with PAC. Hence, these “externalists” are all committed to the *denial* of the the strong externalist principle SE.

Yet the semantic facts about proper names and indexical pronouns provide strong evidence that SE is in fact true. Consider the case of Laura, who upon hearing George use the word ‘disassemble’ when he means ‘dissemble’ exclaims “Incredible!” Hearing Laura’s exclamation, Karl then says

(3) Laura is thinking that George is inarticulate.

It seems intuitively clear that in uttering (3), Karl would be using the name 'George' simply to refer to George and would be saying that Laura is having a thought about him to the effect that he is inarticulate. If ordinary names like 'George' had some sort of descriptive meaning in English, then perhaps a cognitive ascription like (3), in which 'George' is assumed to have smallest scope, could be used to say something about Laura's way of thinking about George.⁸ However, for various reasons, including Kripke's (1972) famous argument based on his 'Gödel'/ 'Schmidt' example, I am convinced that most ordinary names have no descriptive meanings of any sort.⁹

Thus in a case like (3), since the name 'George' lacks any descriptive meaning, the only semantic contribution that the small-scope occurrence of this name could make to the proposition expressed by (3) is simply the name's *referent*. Thus the cognitive predicate contained in (3), 'is thinking that George is inarticulate', must express a property that is relational with respect to George. In effect, then, the cognitive predicate in question, while it is *de dicto* in structure, is semantically *de re*.

Cognitive predicates that contain small-scope indexical and demonstrative pronouns are even more obviously relational in meaning. Consider:

(4) Laura is thinking that *he* (or: *that man*) is inarticulate.

(5) Laura is thinking that *you* are inarticulate.

(6) Laura is thinking that *I* am inarticulate.

Given that the small-scope terms in (3)-(6) all refer to George, the cognitive predicates in (3)-(6) all express the same relational property, namely the property that any object *x* has just in case *x* is having a thought about George to the effect that he is inarticulate.

Since the property in question is relational with respect to George, possession of this property by an agent *logically implies* that George exists. Hence the *de dicto*-structured cognitive predicates contained in (3)-(6) all express logically wide properties, and thus sentences of this kind show that semantic externalism (SE) is true.

Of course, since SE is inconsistent with PAC, these same kinds of sentence also provide straightforward counterexamples to PAC. Thus suppose that (3) is true, so that Laura is thinking that George is inarticulate. By PAC it follows that Laura can know a priori that she is thinking that George is inarticulate. But this is just false. Since what Laura allegedly knows a priori logically implies that George exists, it follows that Laura could also know a priori that George exists, and this of course is absurd.

Thus the semantic facts about proper names and indexical pronouns show both that SE is true and that PAC is false.

4. The Retreat to MSE is Unmotivated

Of course, since SE is true and SE implies the weaker principle MSE, MSE is also true. But the fact that PAC is false eliminates what appears to be the primary motivation behind the “metaphysical” externalists’ retreat to the weaker principle MSE and their tacit rejection of SE. For given that PAC is false, the retreat to MSE is just pointless: consistency with a false principle is no advantage.

Another reason that the “metaphysical” externalists might have for their retreat to MSE is their plausible assumption that externalist dependency theses are not knowable a priori.¹⁰ I agree with this assumption. (See McKinsey 2002a and 2002c.) In general, externalist dependency theses are true because certain cognitive properties are relational with respect to certain external contingent objects or substances. But one cannot know a

priori that such relational properties exist, since one cannot know a priori that the relevant contingent objects or substances exist. Now the fact that externalist dependency theses cannot be known a priori might easily lead one to infer that such theses must assert the obtaining of metaphysical but *not* logical relations. For, so the inference goes, if these theses asserted the obtaining of logical relations, then they *would* be knowable a priori.¹¹

But this inference is seriously defective. Consider the following (true) externalist dependency thesis:

- (7) The proposition that Laura is thinking that George is inarticulate logically implies the proposition that George exists.

Even though (7) truly ascribes a logical relation between propositions, (7) is *not* knowable a priori. This is because (7) itself, though a meta-proposition about the logical implication of one proposition by another, is also a proposition that is singular with respect to the referents of the names 'Laura' and 'George'. Since the truth of (7) logically requires the existence of these objects, one cannot know that (7) is true without knowing that both Laura and George exist, and the latter knowledge is not in general obtainable a priori. What *is* knowable a priori is not (7), but rather the general formal principle of which (7) is an instance, namely

- (8) For any objects x and y , and any relation R , the proposition that xRy logically implies the proposition that y exists.

So *part* of the basis of one's knowledge that (7) is true is knowable a priori. But (7) itself is not knowable a priori. Hence it simply does not follow from the assumption that externalist theses are not knowable a priori that such theses must ascribe the obtaining of

metaphysical but *not* logical dependency relations. Thus the fact that externalist theses are not knowable a priori provides no reasonable basis for assuming that only some weak “metaphysical” form of externalism like MSE could be correct.

Many of those who have discussed my reductio argument in the literature have assumed that the argument requires as a premise the (false) assumption that externalist dependency theses are all knowable a priori.¹² But this is simply wrong. Again, the only premise that my argument requires is the principle CA, that the capacity for a priori knowledge is closed under logical implication.¹³

5. Individuating Thoughts

Since PAC is false, it is an incorrect expression of the traditional idea that we have privileged access to the fundamental features of our thoughts. I have proposed elsewhere (McKinsey 1994a) that the correct principle would restrict the properties of a thought to which one has privileged access to those fundamental semantic properties that *individuate* the thought, in the following sense:

- (I) A thought that a person *x* has in a possible world *w* is *individuated* by a property *F* just in case in any other possible world *w**, a person *y* would have the very same thought if and only if in *w** *y* also has a thought that has *F*.

Then the correct principle of privileged access would be

Privileged Access to Individuating Properties (PAI)

It is necessarily true that if a person’s thought is individuated by a property *F*, then that person can in principle come to know a priori that he or she has a thought that has the property *F*.

We have seen that no one ever has privileged access to one's having any logically wide psychological property, and so PAI implies an important metaphysical principle to the effect that our thoughts are individuated only by logically *narrow* properties (where a property is logically narrow if and only if it is not logically wide). I will call this principle

Logical Internalism (LI)

It is necessarily true that if a person's thought is individuated by a given property F, then F is logically narrow.

I endorse both PAI and LI.

I indicated earlier that I also endorse semantic externalism, the thesis SE that many *de dicto*-structured cognitive predicates express logically wide properties. But of course SE is perfectly consistent with both PAI and LI. For being merely a *semantic* thesis, SE is silent on the metaphysical question of which kinds of properties *individuate* our thoughts.

Those who like me restrict their externalism to the semantics of cognitive predicates are thus free to endorse the principle PAI, that we have privileged access to the fundamental properties that individuate our thoughts. But it seems to me that many philosophers have wanted to endorse externalism as a *metaphysical* (not just semantic) view about the *nature* of thought. And many of these externalists, I suggest, can most plausibly be understood as claiming that certain kinds of thoughts are individuated, in the sense I've defined, by their logically wide contents, or by the logically wide property of having such a content. (For details, see McKinsey 1994a. By a 'logically wide' content, I mean an abstract semantic entity, like a singular proposition, whose very

existence logically implies the existence of some contingent object or substance.) We might call this view

Logical Externalism (LE)

In some cases, a person is thinking that *p*, the content that *p* is logically wide, and the person's thought is individuated by the property of being a thought that has the content that *p*.

LE is the sort of view that is endorsed by those who follow Gareth Evans (1982) in holding that there are "object-dependent" thoughts. These are thoughts like Laura's thought that George is inarticulate, which are based on direct or demonstrative reference and which have Russellian singular propositions as contents. According to LE, such thoughts would not be the thoughts they are – the thoughts would not exist – independently of their singular contents and the objects that are constituents of those contents. However, my original reductio shows that we can have no privileged access to the logically wide properties of our thoughts, and so PAI implies that our thoughts cannot be individuated by such properties, contrary to LE.

Being inconsistent with the most plausible principle of privileged access, LE is thus false.¹⁴ But the devotee of metaphysically but not logically wide cognitive properties might want to endorse a different externalist view of individuating properties, which we can call

Metaphysical Externalism (ME)

In some cases, a person is thinking that *p*, the content that *p* is metaphysically but not logically wide, and the person's thought is individuated by the property of being a thought that has the content that *p*.

Now ME has a distinct advantage over LE, in that ME, like logical internalism (LI) is perfectly consistent with the principle PAI, that we have privileged access to the properties that individuate our thoughts. So we need to consider whether, in addition to logical internalism (LI), ME might also be true. That is, we need to consider whether in some cases, the logically narrow property that individuates a thought might also be the metaphysically wide property of being a thought that has a specific metaphysically – but *not* logically – wide content.

6. What's Wrong with Metaphysical Externalism (ME)

I believe that ME is false, and my reason is that I can see no way to make sense of the claim that the contents of some thoughts depend metaphysically but not logically for their existence upon contingent objects or substances external to the agent.¹⁵ We can at the outset eliminate *singular propositions* as being the relevant sort of content, since as we've seen, the existence of such propositions that are singular with respect to contingent things *logically* (not just metaphysically) implies the existence of the contingent things in question. The main kind of example considered by the metaphysical externalists is that of cognitive predicates containing natural kind terms, such as 'is thinking that water is wet'. But here again, the imbedded sentence expresses a singular proposition, in this case a proposition about the natural kind W to which water belongs, a proposition to the effect that all stuff that belongs to W is wet.¹⁶ In this case again, the propositional content ascribed to a thought would be *logically* wide, since the existence of the content logically (and so metaphysically) implies the existence of the contingent kind W. So again, this type of content will not serve the metaphysical externalists' purposes.

Apparently then, these externalists must assume that sentences containing natural kind terms must have a *second* type of content in addition to the proposition expressed. And they must also assume that contents of this second type can be metaphysically but not logically wide, and that contents of this type can somehow be ascribed to thoughts by use of such predicates as ‘is thinking that water is wet’.

It is not uncommon for philosophers of language and mind to suggest that some kinds of words and the sentences that contain them can have two types of meaning or content, and that persons’ cognitive attitudes can be characterized in terms of both kinds of content.¹⁷ I have myself proposed this type of view for natural kind terms (McKinsey 1987, 1994a). On my view, the *propositional* meaning of such a term, the contribution made by the term to the propositions expressed by use of it, is simply the relational property of belonging to a given natural kind K. By contrast, such a term also has a *linguistic* meaning. This is the term’s meaning in the language in question, and on my view, it determines the term’s propositional meaning. We might call a term’s linguistic meaning its *conceptual* meaning or content, or simply the concept that the term expresses.

Since metaphysical externalists must rely on this second type of content, they must be committed to the thesis that, in addition to their propositional contributions, natural kind terms express conceptual meanings that are somehow metaphysically, but *not* logically, wide.¹⁸ But oddly enough, no externalist who has emphasized the importance of metaphysically but not logically wide contents has stated, or even suggested, any actual *view* or *account* that would explain, or at least help us understand,

what these allegedly wide concepts or meanings are, or what makes these concepts or meanings metaphysically but not logically related to external things.

In my opinion, these alleged metaphysically but not logically wide conceptual contents are just an unintelligible philosophers' fiction, like the idealists' Absolute or the vitalists' *élan vitale*. Kripke's (1972) important discovery that there are a posteriori metaphysical dependencies, like the dependency of water's existence upon the existence of H₂O, makes sense because such dependencies are due to the *nature* or *essence* of some sort of object or substance, and the truth about such natures can only be known by empirical investigation. But surely, the suggestion that some *concepts* or *meanings* could also have "hidden" natures or essences discoverable only by science (neurophysiology perhaps?), natures that somehow necessarily (but not logically) relate these concepts to external objects or substances, is a suggestion that is quite unintelligible and that should not be taken seriously by analytic philosophers. After all, concepts and meanings, like numbers, properties and relations, are *abstract entities*. Unlike material substances like water and gold, these abstract entities simply do not *have* hidden natures or essences that are discoverable only by scientific investigation.

By contrast, it is fairly easy to state a clear, intelligible view on which the conceptual meanings of natural kind terms are *logically* wide, and thus are also metaphysically wide for this reason. On the sort of view I've proposed, the linguistic or conceptual meaning of a natural kind term is provided by a semantic rule whose specification requires direct reference to some contingent object or substance. (See McKinsey 1987, 1991b, 1994a.) The linguistic meaning of 'water', for instance, is captured by a rule of the following sort:

(W) For any token ϕ of ‘is water’ and any property F, ϕ is to predicate F if and only if there is just one natural kind K such that (in the actual world) the watery stuff found in *our* environment belongs to K, and F = the property of belonging to K. Here, ‘watery stuff’ is a euphemism for a conjunction of surface qualities that ordinary speakers associate with ‘water’. Use of the indexical expression ‘*our* environment’ allows me to distinguish the meaning that ‘water’ has in the English spoken by *us*, the inhabitants of Earth, from the meaning of ‘water’ in the English spoken by our counterparts on the Twin Earth of Putnam’s (1975) famous example. (For details, see McKinsey 1987.)

On my view, the conceptual contents of natural kind terms are logically (and hence metaphysically) wide in a manner analogous to the logical wideness of singular propositions. Thus the rule (W) is singular with respect to the referent of the indexical ‘*our*’, namely, the class of human inhabitants of Earth, and so the existence of this rule logically requires the existence of the human race, a contingent entity. As a result, the conceptual content ascribed to a thought by use of a predicate like ‘is thinking that water is wet’ is also logically wide, requiring for its existence the existence of the contingent object that is an essential component of the linguistic meaning of ‘water’. (For details, see McKinsey 1991b, 1994a, and 1999.) Given my original reductio argument, no one can have a priori privileged access to the fact that one’s thought has a logically wide content of the sort that is expressed by use of natural kind terms. Thus by PAI, cognitive predicates containing these terms ascribe properties that do not succeed in individuating persons’ thoughts or other attitudes.

The main competitor to my semantic account of the wideness of natural kind terms is the so-called “causal theory”, according to which the referents of both proper names and natural kind terms are somehow determined by some as yet unspecified kind of causal relation between the terms and their referents. Proponents of metaphysically but not logically wide conceptual contents all seem to endorse the causal theory. But as far as I can see, the causal theory is a semantic dead-end.¹⁹ In particular, and in contrast to my account, the causal theory provides no suggestion whatever as to what the conceptual meaning of a natural kind term might be like, and it yields no clue at all as to why, or in what respect, such terms’ conceptual meanings would be either logically or metaphysically wide.

Given that no actual account has been suggested as to how some conceptual meanings might be metaphysically but not logically wide, given that this idea is in fact at least *prima facie* unintelligible, and in light of the fact that I have proposed and defended a clear, intelligible account on which the wideness of both propositional and conceptual meanings are given explanations in terms of *logical* implication, the metaphysical externalist’s principle of individuation ME should not be taken seriously. Thus the clearest and most plausible metaphysical principle of individuation for thoughts is my principle of logical internalism LI.

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In this paper, I have tried to clarify my reductio argument for the inconsistency of semantic externalism (SE) and the unrestricted principle of privileged access to content (PAC). I argued that the most common response to my argument, which is to endorse a weaker “metaphysical” form of semantic externalism (MSE), is both

inappropriate and based on mistaken assumptions. Instead, we should respond to the *reductio* by simply accepting the true principle SE and replacing the false PAC by a restricted principle of privileged access to the properties that *individuate* our thoughts, my principle PAI. This principle has important metaphysical consequences, since it implies that our thoughts are individuated only by logically *narrow* properties (LI), and hence it implies that there are no “object-dependent” thoughts. Finally, I argued against a form of metaphysical externalism (ME) on which some thoughts are individuated by metaphysically but not logically wide conceptual contents. I contended that this idea is unintelligible and should not be taken seriously, especially given the existence of my clear alternative account of conceptual wideness.

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Notes

¹ The brief explanation here of a “wide” mental property is inadequate, but it should serve my purposes here. For clear definitions of the concepts of “wide” and “narrow” psychological properties, and for detailed discussion of the difficulties in providing such definitions, see McKinsey 1991b and 2002a.

² This principle is quite similar to the principle of privileged access discussed and endorsed by McLaughlin and Tye (1998, p. 286).

³ See McKinsey 1987, where I introduced and discussed this notion of the a priori. In adopting a conception that allows a priori knowledge of some contingent truths, I was following Plantinga (1974, pp. 1-9).

⁴ In my original statement of the reductio in 1991a, p. 15, I implicitly appealed to CA, which I still believe is a correct closure principle. More recently, I have shown that CA is derivable from two other closure principles for apriority, principles that may be even more obviously correct than CA. For details, see McKinsey 2002a, pp. 206-210.

⁵ Although I have myself discussed these questions. See McKinsey 1994a and 2002a.

⁶ Brueckner (1992) appears to make *both* of these suggestions, the first on p. 116 and the second on pp. 113 and 114. I replied to Brueckner in McKinsey 1994b. Burge (1998) was the first to suggest something like the metaphysical evasion, but it has been suggested by many others as a response to my reductio. See for instance Nuccetelli 2003 (pp. 183-84, note 7) and Goldberg 2003. McLaughlin and Tye (1998) at least implicitly endorsed the same sort of response. I replied at length to their criticisms in McKinsey 2002b.

⁷ A proposition p metaphysically entails a proposition q just in case it is metaphysically necessary that if p then q, that is, it is true in every possible world that if p then q. Since all logical necessities are metaphysical necessities (but not vice versa), all logical implications are also metaphysical entailments, but not vice versa. Hence SE implies MSE, but not vice versa. Similarly, all forms of logical wideness, whether of properties, contents, or concepts are forms of metaphysical wideness, but not vice versa.

⁸ I have argued elsewhere (McKinsey 1999) that there are in fact names with descriptive meanings in natural languages like English, though such names are rare. I have also explained and defended an account of cognitive ascriptions on which such descriptive names could be used to ascribe thoughts involving particular ways of thinking of objects. See McKinsey 1986, 1994a, 1999.

⁹ For detailed discussions of what Kripke’s famous example does and does not show, see McKinsey 1978a, 1978b, and 1984.

¹⁰ See for instance Gallois and O’Leary-Hawthorne 1996 and McLaughlin and Tye 1998.

¹¹ McLaughlin and Tye (1998) apparently make just this inference. See p. 290, where they explicitly assume that all conceptual (logical) truths are knowable a priori.

¹² See for instance Brown 1995, Gallois and O’Leary-Hawthorne 1996, Boghossian 1997, Davies 1998, and McLaughlin and Tye 1998.

¹³ For a thorough discussion of this topic, see McKinsey 2002a, pp. 206-210.

¹⁴ I have elsewhere provided strong additional evidence that our thoughts are in general not individuated by singular propositional contents or by the objects which the thoughts are about. See McKinsey 1994a.

¹⁵ I have discussed this topic in some detail in McKinsey 2002b.

¹⁶ For detailed discussion of this idea, see McKinsey 1987.

¹⁷ See for instance McGinn 1982, McLaughlin 1991, and McKinsey 1986, 1987, 1994a and 1999.

¹⁸ McLaughlin and Tye (1998) seem to endorse such a thesis. For critical discussion, see McKinsey 2002c.

¹⁹ For critical discussion of the causal theory of names, see McKinsey 1978a, 1978b, and 1984.